



# TRICARE HELP E-MAIL SERVICE (THEMS) NEWSLETTER

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“Helping to Understand”



## TRICARE Help Newsletter

This newsletter is a publication of the TRICARE Help E-mail Service (THEMS), operated by the U.S. Army Medical Command in San Antonio, Texas.

### What is THEMS?

THEMS is a free e-mail service that provides quick answers to TRICARE questions. Clinical issues should be referred to your primary care provider. The e-mail address is: TRICARE\_help@amedd.army.mil. Click here



to send your TRICARE questions, concerns, or comments.

### When the Active Duty (AD) Sponsor Deploys from Overseas

The following information applies to the families of AD military members who return from an overseas area to the United States upon deployment of the sponsor. Normally, active duty family members (ADFMs) who

accompany the military sponsor on an overseas assignment are enrolled in TRICARE Overseas Prime (TOP).

Here are some important points to consider.

(1) If the sponsor is deployed to another location while still assigned overseas, the family may choose to stay at their current location and remain enrolled in TOP. This is particularly appropriate if the spouse is employed in the overseas area or the children are enrolled in school. In this case, the family is covered under TOP, and nothing will change for the family as long as the sponsor remains assigned to the home station.

(2) Many families choose to go home to visit friends or family for a short period (60 days or less) while the sponsor is deployed. In this situation, the family should leave their TOP enrollment intact and use military or civilian providers in CONUS, as appropriate. No referral or prior authorization is required. Prime access standards apply to TOP enrollees seeking care from

military treatment facilities (MTFs) while visiting CONUS.

(a) Specialty Care--4 weeks.  
(b) Wellness Visits--4 weeks.  
(c) Routine Care--1 week.  
(d) Urgent Care--24 hours.  
(e) Emergency Care--  
Immediately seek help at the closest facility with the capability for care.

(3) Family members who leave the overseas area for more than 60 days should execute a portability transfer of their Prime enrollment to a military or civilian provider in a Prime region in CONUS, or, if relocating far from a military installation, disenroll from Prime and use TRICARE Standard/Extra. Beneficiaries can make their election known by calling 1-888-777-8343 and selecting the appropriate overseas region, or by informing their servicing overseas TSC prior to their departure. This information is required in writing and should state the effective date of their arrival at the CONUS location. When the family returns to the overseas area, they can again enroll in TOP.

TRICARE Prime Remote is a stateside program and is not

available if ADFMs are not residing with the sponsor. Also, TOP in remote overseas locations is not available to ADFMs who relocate to remote overseas areas while the sponsor is deployed.

Dental care is a separate concern with unique issues to consider. If the active duty family is already enrolled in the TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) while they are overseas, they may continue their enrollment and use dentists while traveling in the United States or if they are permanently reassigned stateside. United Concordia Companies, Inc. (UCCI), provide dental services for the TDP to ADFMs who elect to enroll and pay the premiums. Members must remember there is a 12-month lock-in period for enrollment. If the sponsor elects to disenroll family members before the 12-month lock-in period ends, the sponsor may be responsible for paying the remainder of the premiums. There are some exceptions to this policy. For more information on special circumstances that allow family members to enroll and disenroll before the 12-month lock-in/lock-out period is met, contact UCCI

for more details. Family members should understand that routine dental care is not normally available at CONUS

military dental treatment facilities. ADFMs should consider remaining enrolled in the TDP when they go overseas, as the benefit can be used overseas and any time the family returns stateside. For more information about the TDP and enrollment you may call UCCI at 1-800-866-8499 or go to the UCCI website at <http://www.ucci.com/was/uccweb/tdp/tdp.jsp>.

Prior to deployment, the sponsor should discuss proposed health care alternatives with the family. The overseas TSCs can assist members with any questions they may have concerning their health care benefits and provide the number to the stateside contractor should the family decide to transfer their Prime enrollment. The TSC can help facilitate disenrollment if that is the family's choice. The number for the overseas TSCs is 1-888-777-8343. Callers select from the menu to choose the appropriate overseas region.

If either the sponsor or a family member has a problem or a question, it is very important to quickly seek help. For assistance, call a Beneficiary Counseling and Assistance Coordinator located at a MTF. Another useful source for help is THEMES. THEMES can be

reached by sending an e-mail to:

[TRICARE\\_Help@amedd.army.mil](mailto:TRICARE_Help@amedd.army.mil).

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